

Parents assail county over child policy

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By *The Tribune news services*

About 35 people gathered outside the Alameda County Administration Building in Oakland yesterday to charge that overzealous county agencies are unlawfully using county funds to take children away from their parents.

John Murcko, the president of Victims of Child Abuse Laws (VOCAL), said that county agencies often take children away from a parent based on an allegation of abuse even though 80 percent of such allegations turn out to be bogus.

He said the role of the county used to be to help divorcing par-

ents work out cooperative par-

enting arrangements.

But now, he said, "Some of

those parents learned to obtain

sole custody and vent their an-

ger and gain revenge on their ex-

spouses by fabricating allega-

tions of child abuse."

Murcko said accused parents

are often deprived of visiting

their children at all, even during

the holidays.

Those attending the rally

brought Christmas presents to

county officials and asked them

to give the toys to their children.

Murcko said, "The purpose of

this rally is to send a message to

the children that they are not

forgotten and are wanted back

home by their families."

Helen Knudson, Alameda

County social services director,

could not be reached for com-

ment.